



# Civic Action... That Is Meaningful

## The Recipe for Success

All students agree...

*...find the activity that hooks you!*

This process may be the most important step of all. If the project is not of value to you it will be hard to maintain interest or to find people who can support your efforts.

### Key Ingredients

**Attitude**—Be Open to Possibilities

**Time**— Make sure your project is worth your time.

DO NOT SETTLE FOR YOUR FIRST IDEA!

**Investigation**—

- Find out what is needed and *who your allies are.*
- *Have conversations* with friends, teachers, AmeriCorps members, neighbors, church leaders, etc.
- *Check out the community needs* and what is already happening.
- *Find people /organizations* to help you with your project.
- *Check out the district's service-learning database* to find out more about local organizations

### Allies

Find folks, young and old, who:

- ♦ Have helpful knowledge and skills
- ♦ Believe in you!

Consider finding more than one person because the support you need will vary throughout the project.

*Develop a small group of students who can either work together on a common project, or support each other on their personal projects.*

It's helpful to:

- ♦ Involve people who have different skills, for they can help with different portions of the project.
- ♦ Set up specific dates to meet with your supporters so they can help recharge your interest.



**This is your time to find something that you are passionate about.**

Helpful websites:

[www.youthactivism.com](http://www.youthactivism.com)

[www.youthnoise.org](http://www.youthnoise.org)

[www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)

[www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov)

### Manage Your Time—Don't Procrastinate!

Students agree that one of the greatest struggles is to pace yourself. After all, it is your senior year! Some tips that may help:

- Put due dates in a visible place, marking due dates 2 or 3 day before due date.
- Create a binder for your project to keep track of progress.
- If you need blocks of time to work in the community, set up those opportunities on days when you have late start or early release, and set them up well in advance.
- Get a project partner—work with another student
- If you plan ahead, you can get some of your paper work or research done at school

# *Civic Action... That Is Creative*



## Be Inventive...

These examples can help you to build  
connections between  
what you enjoy doing  
and the needs of your community

Concern/ Hope	Talents/ Gifts	Project Possibilities
More beautiful community	Visual Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and paint a community mural</li> <li>Work with bus system to beautify bus</li> <li>Create a neighborhood kiosk</li> <li>Create banners that decorate street lights</li> </ul>
Too many animals in shelter	Web Design Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a youth-friendly web site for the Humane Society</li> <li>Create a public service announcement</li> <li>Design and distribute posters or t-shirts that encourage pet adoption</li> </ul>
Loneliness/depression for youth with long term illnesses	Video Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize a video game event for teens at a hospital</li> <li>Develop an online video competition and promote it</li> <li>Create a video game league</li> </ul>
Positive after-school options for youth	Can relate to kids who do not feel they have a safe/fun place to go	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with your local parks department to build programs around interests identified by students in your neighborhood</li> <li>Support after school clubs at your local elementary school or Boys/Girls Club</li> <li>Work with 4-H, Girls Scouts or Community Education to offer or promote programs in your local community</li> </ul>
Global Warming	Graphic Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish a calendar online with daily activities that promote sustainability</li> <li>Increase awareness in your school by organizing special days—No Cars Day; No Paper Day, etc.</li> <li>Paint a fabric mural that can be exhibited in your school or community</li> </ul>
Childhood Obesity	Athlete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop after school programs that appeal to kids who do not like competitive sports</li> <li>Create and distribute a map of safe walking and biking routes to school</li> <li>Promote healthy lunches and snacks in your school</li> </ul>
Cancer	Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the local fundraising for breast cancer research</li> <li>Develop an annual school team that will recruit students to support the annual Race for the Cure or other cancer related event</li> </ul>

**Have fun and learn  
while helping your community and your world!**



# Civic Action... That Rocks

## What others have done...

### Teach others

- After learning how many young people are homeless on Clark County Streets, Caitlin and some friends developed a public awareness campaign and educated others about this need through posters, brochures, public service announcements, a community forum and visits to legislators.
- One student, who had experienced domestic abuse, developed a Public Service Announcement on a local teen radio show, helping other teens understand what they can do when their friends talk about violence in their homes.

### Create an ongoing event or product

- In 1992 a high school senior established an annual fundraiser for Doernbecker Hospital called Mr. Hudson's Bay. In 2006, Ken raised more than \$70,000, making total contributions more than \$500,000.
- Concerned that so few young people vote, a student hosted a voter registration event at her school.
- David wanted to help more children enjoy playing instruments. He and several high school musicians hosted a musical event at a low-income elementary school, enabling children to try out several instruments and to learn about the free music program offered at a neighboring school.
- Jackson volunteered as a Zoo Ambassador at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle. He used his experience to design a new exhibit for a Sumatran tiger.



### Research/ Invention

- Naseema, whose sister has a brain disorder, helped support a brain research project at OHSU.
- Kevin created a fully functional 20-foot-tall wind turbine for Bellingham Bay.
- Concerned about plant diversity, a student volunteered to support a botanical research project.



### Public Policy

- A team of students got legislation passed that changes how Washington State History will be taught.
  - Realizing that the girls' softball team did not receive adequate equipment or facilities, Erin made a presentation to the school board summarizing her concern and the budget needed to comply with the federal Title IX laws. Erin now coaches softball on the very field she helped build.

### Public Information / Advocacy

- Having interned at a solar panel construction company in the summer, a senior realized that his high school could reduce its ecological foot print by installing solar panels. He developed a comprehensive proposal which showed the long range financial savings for installing specific solar panels. The school is now exploring the feasibility of implementing his recommendations.
- Melissa G. and her team created a brochure to educate and recruit volunteers for Hospice, and to educate the general public about their options in Hospice and a related organizations. Their original plan was to compile a book of stories and thoughts of people during the dying process, but found that difficult to accomplish because of the sensitive nature of the subject and the loss of many of the patients before the seniors had a chance to interview them. By changing their project to a brochure to raise awareness of the need for Hospice nurses and volunteers, the team hoped to reach people with a knack for comforting and caring.
- Lin was the student member of the Sammamish City Council for his senior project. He sat on the council and advocated for teen issues, including advocating against teen profiling by local police. He also wrote a weekly column on teen issues in a local paper as an extension of this project.



### The following web sites can inspire you by examples

<http://www.freechild.org> "I liked the detail of the articles and the listings of what students did to help in solving the problems. Could use more clear ways for people to help each other and ways in which small acts can make a big difference."

<http://www.youthactivism.com> -a great list of specific ways youth have helped address different issues.

<http://www.youthnoise.org> - great for students who like to create and have a little fun while they work.